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ABSTRACT

A former teacher of secondary talented and gifted (T.A.G.) students outlines principles and procedures of a seminar approach in which students assume the role of teachers. Procedures are seen to involve student interviews, student teacher conferences, and opportunities for independent work. Sample forms for the interview and project study aspects are included, as is a list of student-selected topics (such as aggression, ecology, and shoplifting). (CL)

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The Seminar Approach To T.A.G. Education

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The Seminar Approach to T.A.G. Education

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What kind of skills, abilities, and attitudes do we want to encourage in students?

(1).*Decision makers.*

(2).*Producers of knowledge* rather than only consumers.

(3).*Autonomous learners* who enjoy the excitement of learning.

(4).*Creative thinkers* who lack the fear of being creative and can develop thinking strategies of different kinds.

(5).*Question askers* who attempt to make some sense of the world about them.

(6).*Self actualizers* who think well of themselves - see a stake in others. Those *aware* of their environment, *free* to be themselves, *honest* in their perceptions and *trust* in what is presently real for them.

(7).*Communicators* who can detect the feelings and positive wants of others and themselves.

(8).*Leaders* who have both task commitment and the social skills to accomplish their goals and objectives.

(9).*Innovators* who are prepared for change by being imaginative, and accepting risk takers.

(10).*Achievers* who have a positive coping style.

Perspective — I speak to you from the point of view of a classroom teacher of TAG students at the secondary level.

Assumptions — My underlying assumptions are:

A. People learn more thoroughly when they are required to teach those learning to others.

B. People are likely to be more intrinsically motivated to learn if they are interested in, and have strengths and abilities related to the topics they study.

C. Placing students in the role of the teacher will encourage many of the skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary for the development of their potential. Among them are the following:

Overview — The seminar approach emphasizes the concept of students as teachers. Each class member is a student and a teacher. He/she learns how to learn and teach utilizing project study and discussion methods. Student project study and the teaching of learned information to fellow class participants is the core of the seminar approach to TAG Education.

The normal role of the classroom teacher is changed from dispenser of information to that of a resource person, facilitator, and guide. In this new role the teacher models the behaviors and activities desired, sets guidelines, and helps students generate alternatives by becoming aware of each student's strengths, interests, and abilities.

Seminar Requirements —

1. *(Plan and time elements)* A seminar project plan must be submitted for approval during (e.g. the first week of each 9 week quarter See Attachment No. 2).
2. *(Resource Element)* A minimum of three different kinds of resources must be used in conducting the project study. (See Attachment No. 3).
3. *(Focus & Creativity Element)* Each seminar will include an activity, or experience which focuses the class on a central concept or major point concerning the project study or investigation (See Attachment No. 4).
4. *(Leadership & Communication Elements)* Each student will conduct a divergent discussion with his/her classmates as part of his/her overall project study.

Purpose — The purpose of the seminar approach was to offer a class that challenged TAG students to more fully develop their potential by providing a personalized, individually differentiated, and qualitative learning experience.

The Process:

1. *Interviewing* each student, a former teacher the student liked, and a parent in order to determine the *interests, strengths, and abilities* of each individual in the class. (See Attachment No. 1)
2. Providing an opportunity for TAG students to work with other students of like ability (not necessarily their peers).
3. *Student-teacher conferences* designed to provide feedback, resource information, and generate alternatives.
4. Providing the opportunity for *independent work*.
5. *"In place of"* rather than "in addition to" learning experiences.

Suggested Interview Format for Assessing Type of Program in Which Students Would Best Function

Suggested Questions	Possible Inferences from answers
SCHOOL	
Subject look forward to?	Whether conformist or individual thinker
Experiences that stand out from all others	
Teacher that influenced you?	Special interests
Enjoy skill development drill?	
Like creating dioramas, stories, etc.	Learning style possibilities
Learning -- attitude toward?	
Home	
When free time - What do you like to do?	Attitude toward free time
Favorite sport?	Industorious
Tasks around house?	Decision making
Ever make anything?	Self Directive
What books do you own?	Creative
Pets?	Inside-outside activities
Special Trip	
Free to go anywhere -	Own direction
	Goals - Aims
Where go? On earth or in space	Model - images as far as people
Who with? Can bring one person	Detailed descriptions
How get there?	Ideas concerning other environments
What do?	
How long stay?	
Estimate of Self	
Ability	Self-esteem
Comfortabe with yourself	Confidence in ability
What like that you can do?	Goal-oriented
What wish you could do?	
Fantasy/Factual Handling	
Outgrowth of above	Directed toward factual handling of materials or divergent, creativity/ manipulation
Try chart instruction or creative story involving two or three objects	
General	
Good conversationalist	
Humor?	
How react to adult interviewer?	
End interview with "Is there anything you would like to ask me?"	

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Name_____ Grade_____

Date_____

School District_____

T.A.G. STUDENT INTERVIEW
Area Education Agency 13
Roger Hanson, Consultant

Interviewer_____

SCHOOL APPROACH RESPONSES:

Subjects or Activities:

Experience:

Method:

HOME APPROACH RESPONSES:

Inside:

Outside:

Collections:

Pets:

TRIP: Where?

Who?

How Travel?

Time?

Activities?

SELF ASSESSMENT:

Three Words:

Ability:

Wish:

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

STUDENTS PROGRAM: The objective of each TAG Program is to provide an "in place of" rather than "in addition to" learning experience designed to encourage the strengths, interests and abilities of each student.

SITUATIONAL TASKS:

Name_____Grade_____Age_____

School District_____Date_____

T.A.G. PARENT INTERVIEW
Area Education Agency 13
Roger Hanson, Consultant

Interviewer_____

SCHOOL APPROACH RESPONSES:
(child's observed feelings about)

Subjects:

Learning Styles:

Attitudes:

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Peers:

Adults:

Personality Traits:

HOME APPROACH RESPONSES:

Interests:

Inside:

Outside:

Collections:

Pets:

Travel:

Activities:

OUTSTANDING ABILITY:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Name_____ Grade_____ Age_____

School District_____ Date_____

T.A.G. TEACHER INTERVIEW
Area Education Agency 13
Roger Hanson, Consultant

Interviewer_____

SCHOOL APPROACH RESPONSES:

Performance in Subject Areas:

Learning Style:

Attitude:

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS:

Peers:

Adults:

Personality Traits:

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

Apparent Interests:

Outstanding Ability:

Recommendations:

Attachment #2

Quarter Project Objective

Class Period Number:_____

Name:_____

Project Title:_____

Quarter Number:_____

Project Option:_____

Completion Date:_____

Initial Quarter Grade Goal:_____

Date Approved:_____

Format for Objective:

QUESTIONS: 1. What is the purpose of your Project Study?_____

_____

2. How does your project relate to U.S. History or Social Studies?_____

_____

_____

A. Problem: Why a student is involved in this Topic Study._____

_____

_____

B. Process: How a student will go about gathering information, resources and studying the topic. List the steps and/or the procedures used to complete your Project Objective.

_____

_____

_____

C. End Product: What the final end result of the study will produce, to be written in words which are measurable and observable. BE SPECIFIC._____

_____

_____

_____

D. Proficiency: How Well: What needs to happen in order for you to feel that your project is successful? (e.g. number of pages, minimum % of class participation, list of questions your study hopes to ask or answer.) BE SPECIFIC!!_____

_____

_____

E. Please schedule your Student Initiated Conference with me soon!!!

DEVELOPING LEARNING ACTIVITY OPTIONS

I. Acquiring Knowledge Through Action (Doing)

1. Simulate a real life experience
2. Visit and take part in a real life situation
3. Perform some type of exploration
4. Perform some experiment
5. Take photographs
6. Conduct a survey
7. Go on an excursion for the purpose of acquiring information
8. Create an exhibit
9. Make a film
10. Undertake role playing to enact problems, events, and concerns
11. Collect descriptions, reports, interviews, and responses to questions
12. Build scale models and drawings
13 Hold a group discussion
14. Use educational games or make educational games
15. Use community and governmental resources

II. Acquiring Knowledge Through Writing

1. Write short stories, articles, speeches, opinions, comments
2. Write letters, thank you notes
3. Prepare an agenda for a meeting
4. Write scripts for plays, operas, radio or television dramas
5. Prepare radio and television programs
6. Prepare a lesson to be given to a group in class
7. List questions of interest for individual and group use
8. Prepare an outline for individual activities
9. Prepare programs for sharing with others
10. Develop a plan or scheme
11. Prepare maps, charts tables or diagrams

III. Acquiring Knowledge Through Reading

1. Read a book, magazine or newspaper article, reference or supplementary reading materials
2. Do research in the library
3. Visit book stores

IV. Acquiring Knowledge Through Listening and Observing

1. Contact a noted personage on the speakerphone
2. Visit a school, museum, municipal building or art gallery
3. Attend a conference, forum or seminar
4. See a play, a musical or an opera
5. View a television program, a 16mm film strip
6. Interview a resource person for information
7. Visit a television or radio station
8. Utilize the tool of educational technology, eg. overhead projector et al.
9. Utilize the learning center or a laboratory.

THESE ARE BUT A FEW IDEAS TO BEGIN WITH. YOU WILL PROBABLY HAVE MANY MORE IDEAS.

Students participate more completely with greater understanding and more enthusiasm when they have *creatively focused* in on a major concept of the lesson. As a result of *creatively* emphasizing a major concept, class discussions improve because they have become more meaningful.

Teachers can involve students in creative ways by using *imagination* exercises such as guided fanticies on simple "close your eyes and pretend" experiences. They can use *body movement* to dramatize a mock situation, a role play of perceptions or simply to include the whole person physically in order to make a point.

In order to take advantage of *emotional* involvement, teachers can use values clarification techniques, competition, exercises in human relations training, hot issues, music slide presentations, short films, divergent questions or any teaching tool or strategy that personalizes instruction.

The question to ask is: how can I get the class involved on an *emotional* level, on a *physical* level and on an *imagination* level?

The following is a list of topics students selected for investigation, and their various methods to focus upon or creatively emphasize those concepts.

Topic: Aggression

Focus Element: The student seminar leader inflated several balloons and put a real dollar bill in one and play money in the others. Each student was given a straight pin to be used only for baloon breaking. The student who broke the balloon with the real money was told he could keep the money. Each class member observed and/or experiened aggressive behavior in the three minutes allowed for the activity.

Topic: Ecology

Focus Element: The student seminar leader produced a music/sound/slide presentation. He used a Kodak Ectographic machine and a camera to take slides of various subjects mentioned in Three Dog Nights song "Out In The Country"

Topic: Proxemics and Body Language

Focus Element: The student seminar leader invited several unsuspecting study hall students into the classroom and sat them in pairs in various arrangements eg. face to face, side to side, back to back, and at various distances from one another. The class was asked to observe their body language in these various arrangements.

Topic: Loneliness

Focus Element: The student seminar leader showed the film; "The String Bean." Afterwords, class members were given a list with several quotes on the topic and discussion questions that related to the quotes and the film.

Topic: Shoplifting

Focus Element: The student seminar leader conducted a survey on the topic prior to the class and selected one risk oriented question to ask the class after his report on the survey. He then related his research findings resulting from several visits to area wide businesses.

Topic: Self-Perceptions and Shyness

Focus Element: The student seminar leader ask each class member if they wanted their name to be sung, shouted, or whispered three times in unison by the rest of the class. The class acted on the request and discussed their reasoning etc.

Topic: Personal Values and Their Relationship to Goals

Focus Element: The student seminar leader conducted a Values Auction. (Values Clarification Technique)

Topic: Dance: Five Decades in the Twentieth Century

Focus Element: The student seminar leaders demonstrated various dances popular in different periods of American history and taught those dances to interested class mates. Their thesis was based on the understanding that historical events, beliefs, attitudes, and values are reflected in the arts (eg. Dance and Music)